

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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TAGS: SHUM, PINT, SOPN, RP

SUBJ: OPPOSITION TABLOID NEWSPAPER APPEARS IN MANILA

REF: MANILA 3042

1. SUMMARY: FIRST EDITION OF TEN-PAGE OPPOSITION TABLOID NEWSPAPER CALLED MALYANG PILIPINAS (FREE PHILIPPINES) HAS APPEARED IN MANILA. NEWSPAPER IS PUBLISHED BY LIBERAL PARTY LEADER JOVITO SALONGA'S ALLIANCE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. THUS FAR ITS EXISTENCE HAS BEEN TOTALLY IGNORED BY GOP AND MAJOR PHILIPPINE MEDIA. MALAYANG PILIPINAS APPEARS TO BE MODERATELY OPPOSITIONIST IN TONE; FIRST EDITION FOCUSES ON THE ELECTION, THE WESTINGHOUSE-DISINI SCANDAL, AND STATE DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT. END SUMMARY.

2. INITIAL EDITION OF MALAYANG PILIPINAS WAS SENT TO POLITICAL COUNSELOR BY EX-SENATOR SALONGA MARCH 5. THE TEN-PAGE TABLOID (EIGHT PAGES IN ENGLISH, TWO IN TAGALOG), DATED FEBRUARY 28, SELLS FOR 50 CENTAVOS AND CONTAINS NO ADVERTISEMENTS. ALL ARTICLES ARE EITHER REPRINTS FROM OTHER PUBLICATIONS OR ARE ATTRIBUTED TO MANAGING EDITOR R.A. V. SAGUISAG. (THIS MAY BE A PSEUDONYM; "SAGISAG" MEANS "SYMBOL" OR "PSEUDONY" IN TAGALOG, BUT THERE IS ALSO SUCHMA LAST NAME IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MANILA PHONEBOOK.)

3. THE EDITORIAL BOARD CONSISTS OF THREE FORMER SUPREME COURT JUSTICES AND TWO RELIGIOUS FIGURES: JUSTICES JESUS BARRERA, PASTOR ENDENCIA, CALIXTO ZALDIVAR, JESUIT PRIEST PACIFICO ORTIZ AND PROTESTANT PASTOR CIRILO RIGOS. BUSINESS MANAGER IS RAUL GONZALES (ONE OF AQUINO'S LAWYERS). THE

PUBLISHER IS LISTED AS THE "LLIANCE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS."

4. THE TABLOID'S FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL BY SAGUISAG INDICATES A POLICY OF MODERATE, INTELLECTUAL OPPOSITION: "... WHEN MARTIAL LAW WAS IMPOSED, MR. MARCOS PROCLAIMED THAT HIS OBJECTIVES WERE TO SAVE THE REPUBLIC AND REFORM SOCIETY ... HOW TRUE IT IS, AS THE GERMANS SAY, THAT FORGETTING PURPOSES IS THE MOST COMMON FORM OF STUPIDITY. THIS NEWSPAPER PROPOSES TO PROD AND REMIND. ... WE WILL PERIODICALLY COME OUT FOR AS LONG AS WE ARE TOLERATED TO OPERATE. WE ARE NEITHER PRO-KBL NOR PRO-LABAN; WE ARE PRO-FILIPINO, BUT THE SLANT IS AIMED TO HELP REDRESS THE CRUSHING IMBALANCE IN THE TOTAL MEDIA SITUATION."

5. OPINION COLUMN BY SAGUISAG, TITLED "IT SEEMS TO ME," CONTAINS CYNICAL ONE-LINERS ON POLITICAL TOPICS: "UNDER MARTIAL LAW, ONE HAS TO TRY TO BE PARTICULARLY ELOQUENT IN THE SENSE ABBE GALIANI DEFINED 'ELOQUENCE AS THE ART OF SAYING SOMETHING WITHOUT BEING SENT TO THE BASTILE.'

... SADLY THERE ARE CANDIDATES IN BOTH KBL AND LABAN WHO ARE GOOD ARGUMENTS FOR NOT HOLDING ELECTIONS, AND WHO COULD AGAIN BE USED AS EXCUSES TO TWIST THE SWORD STUCK INTO THE BODY POLITIC ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1972. ... KBL STANDS ON ITS RECORD OF PERFORMANCE. 'THERE'S ONLY ONE ISSUE -- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND THAT'S PERFORMANCE.' WHAT INDEED HAS MR. AQUINO DONE THE PAST FIVE AND A HALF YEARS?"

6. FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF ARTICLES CONTAINED IN THE FIRST EDITION:

- PAGE 1: SHORT OFFICIAL BIOGRAPHIES ON ALL METRO-MANILA KBL AND LABAN CANDIDATES; TEXT OF AQUINO'S FEBRUARY 27 LETTER TO MARCOS (MANILA 3338); LONG ARTICLE ON WESTINGHOUSE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN BATAAN PROVINCE, RECITING BOTH ANTI-NUCLEAR AND ANTI-DISINI ARGUMENTS.
- PAGE 3: ARTICLE REPORTING DEFENSE SECRETARY ENRILE'S PUBLIC GUARANTEES OF PRESS FREEDOM.
- PAGE 4: ARTICLE ARGUING THAT "BLACK PROPAGANDA" IS NOT NECESSARY.
- PAGE 5: LONG ARTICLE REVIEWING THE PHILIPPINES' CLAIM TO SABAH.
- PAGE 6: ARTICLE DENOUNCING PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 1110-A, MAKING IT A CAPITAL OFFENSE TO "CONSPIRE" AGAINST THE LIFE OF THE PRESIDENT OR CABINET OR THEIR FAMILIES.
- PAGE 7: FULL TEXT OF STATE DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON THE PHILIPPINES; PNA ARTICLE ON PHILIPPINE EMBASSY'S REBUTTAL OF THE REPORT.

-- TWO-PAGE TAGALOG-LANGUAGE INSERT: ONE ORIGINAL
ARTICLE AND THREE TRANSLATIONS FROM LOCAL PRESS ON
THE WESTINGHOUSE-DISINI SCANDAL.

7. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS NOT NOTICED MALAYANG PILIPINAS
ON SALE IN MANILA, NOR HAVE PHILIPPINE MEDIA OR GOP
OFFICIALS COMMENTED PUBLICLY ON THE EXISTENCE OF THE
NEWSPAPER. IT PRESUMABLY DOES NOT HAVE THE REQUISITE
AUTHORIZATION BY THE GOP-CONTROLLED PRINT MEDIA COUNCIL
AND CAN BE CLOSED DOWN ANY TIME SHOULD IT BECOME TROUBLESOME
TO THE GOVERNMENT.

8. COPY OF NEWSPAPER POUCHED TO EA/PHL.
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